

VZCZCXYZ0130
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHTV #1425/01 1351208
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 151208Z MAY 07
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1095
RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEAHQA/HQ USAF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEADWD/DA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUENAAA/CNO WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEHAD/AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI PRIORITY 2162
RUEHAS/AMEMBASSY ALGIERS PRIORITY 8897
RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY 2139
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY 2966
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY 2163
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY 0036
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY 2907
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 9798
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 0274
RUEHRB/AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY 6879
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY 4284
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH PRIORITY 9185
RUEHTU/AMEMBASSY TUNIS PRIORITY 3374
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 5304
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY 6825
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RHMFISS/COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY
RHMFIUU/COMSIXTHFLT PRIORITY

UNCLAS TEL AVIV 001425

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD

WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM
NSC FOR NEA STAFF

SECDEF WASHDC FOR USDP/ASD-PA/ASD-ISA
HQ USAF FOR XXXX
DA WASHDC FOR SASA
JOINT STAFF WASHDC FOR PA
CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL FOR POLAD/USIA ADVISOR
COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE FOR PAO/POLAD
COMSIXTHFLT FOR 019

JERUSALEM ALSO ICD
LONDON ALSO FOR HKANONA AND POL
PARIS ALSO FOR POL
ROME FOR MFO

SIPDIS
E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

Mideast

Key stories in the media:

Ha'aretz cited information received on Monday from Washington that
Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice is planning a trip to the region

SIPDIS
in June.

The media reported that today Olmert will meet with King Abdullah II of Jordan in Aqaba after taking part in a meeting of Nobel Prizewinners in Petra. The Jerusalem Post quoted senior diplomatic officials in Jerusalem as saying that Olmert may invite the King to address the Knesset. Ha'aretz reported that PA Chairman [President] Mahmoud Abbas canceled his participation in the Petra meeting at the last minute.

Leading media reported that, upon his return from Jordan this afternoon, PM Olmert will participate in a major IDF war game, which will test readiness to deal with multiple threats on several fronts. Israel Radio said that the game will focus on leadership.

Leading media quoted FM Tzipi Livni as saying on Monday before the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee that the peace plans being presented by Arab nations were not a substitute for direct negotiations with the Palestinians. Livni reiterated that a two-state solution is the only answer.

Israel Radio cited the London-based Al-Quds Al-Arabi as saying that Vice President Richard Cheney told his hosts during a tour of the Middle East that the US is determined to end the crisis with Iran even if this required a military strike. The radio also reported that Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Nicholas Burns responded to reports of increasing Iranian nuclear activity by saying that sanctions against Iran should be bolstered. Yediot and Maariv reported that Iran has arrested Haleh Esfandiari, an American woman of Iranian origin, who allegedly spied for Israel.

All media reported that on Monday two brothers who had recently emigrated from France were arrested by police after one of the two confessed to murdering an Arab taxi driver in their Tel Aviv apartment. Media cited the police's suspicion that the murder was a hate crime. Ha'aretz cited the police's fear of retribution.

Ha'aretz quoted Rabbi Avraham Wasserman, one of the organizers of Sunday's high-profile visit to the Temple Mount by dozens of Religious Zionist rabbis, as saying that Religious Zionist rabbis and yeshiva students are planning to continue their visits to the Mount. Two articles in today's Yated Ne'eman, the mouthpiece of Lithuanian (non-Hasidic) ultra-Orthodox -- cited in Ha'aretz -- denounced the rabbis as "idol worshipers", "Reform" Jews, and "merchants trading in the Torah's commandments." Ha'aretz reported that tensions around the Mugrabi Gate archeological works near the Old City have subsided following the evaluation of the construction activity by a Turkish and UN delegation, which confirmed that the Temple Mount is not being harmed by these efforts.

Channel 2-TV reported that IDF soldiers serving in elite units were hurt in a secret trial of a vaccine against anthrax-type biological weapons.

Maariv reported that a far-left wing Harvard University group that includes Jews and Israelis distributed "wanted for crimes of war" posters for former IDF chief of staff Dan Halutz.

Ha'aretz reported that, in a position paper entitled "The Haifa Declaration," a group of Israeli Arab intellectuals are calling on Israel to recognize its responsibility for the Nakba ("The Catastrophe," the Palestinians' term for what happened to them after 1948) and to act to implement the Palestinian refugees' right of return and establishment of a Palestinian state. The paper says that these moves will pave the way to a historic reconciliation between the Jewish nation in Israel and the Palestinian people. Ha'aretz noted that the demands in the Haifa Declaration are similar to those made in previous position papers and consist first and foremost of abolishing the Jewish state.

Ha'aretz cited figures for 2006 released by the GOI's Central Bureau of Statistics according to which Jerusalem is Israel's largest city, with a jurisdiction of 126,000 dunams (approximately 28,000 acres) and 732,000 residents. Some 469,000 (64 percent) of Jerusalem's residents are Jews, compared to some 239,000 (32 percent) Muslims and some 14,700 (2 percent) Christians. The natural growth rate among the highly concentrated ultra-Orthodox Jewish and Arab

communities in Jerusalem is much higher than the national average. Ha'aretz reported that on Monday only seven ambassadors attended the festive gathering at the Knesset celebrating 40 years of Jerusalem's reunification. In attendance were the ambassadors of Georgia, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Cameroon, Congo, the Ivory Coast and Honduras. The ambassadors of EU members, the United States and most other countries represented in Israel boycotted the event because they do not recognize the legitimacy of a unified Jerusalem.

Yediot reported on a European plan to fund the PLO, by-passing Hamas.

The Jerusalem Post reported that, utilizing state-of-the-art laser and fiber optics technology, the IDF plans to "revolutionize" security for the Jewish community of Hebron in an effort to minimize friction between settlers and local Palestinians.

All media reported that PA Interior Minister Hani Kawasmeh resigned on Monday, as factional fighting in the Gaza Strip continued for a second day despite efforts to reach a truce. The fighting, in which four people were killed on Monday and five on Sunday, is the first since Hamas and Fatah agree to form a unity government in February. Leading electronic media reported that this morning Hamas gunmen attacked a Palestinian Presidential Guard's training camp near the Karni crossing. According to the reports, at least 10 people were hurt in the exchanges of fire and the crossing was closed down.

All media reported that on Monday, in a first-of-a-kind request, PM Ehud Olmert's attorneys wrote to Attorney General Menachem Mazuz asking that State Comptroller Micha Lindenstrauss be probed for allegedly abusing his office's powers -- a crime that carries a maximum sentence of three years in prison. The complaint relates to the comptroller's report on Olmert's purchase of a house on Jerusalem's Cremieux St. Leading media reported that Mazuz and the police are unlikely to accede to the request. Ha'aretz reported that AG Menachem Mazuz may veto the return of former justice minister Haim Ramon to the government, which media reported is being actively backed by Olmert.

Major media reported that members of the Kadima Party have advised Vice PM Shimon Peres not to run for the presidency of Israel, because his chances of winning currently appear low.

Leading media quoted Murad Mosli (phon.), a former senior Syrian official, as saying on Sunday on the Internet site of Aljazeera-TV that the remains of Israeli spy Eli Cohen, who was executed in 1965, cannot be accessed because of the construction of a neighborhood and public structures above his grave. Yediot reported that over the weekend a pro-Palestinian organization in Canada called to boycott a bookstore chain whose Jewish owners support IDF soldiers.

Yediot reported that the Israel Police plans to merge its four investigative branches into an "Israeli FBI."

Ha'aretz reported that the Jewish Museum in New York City is currently showing an exhibition of 40 photographs and video films of 23 Israeli and other artists and photographers who try to capture glimpses of life in Israel with their lenses. The newspaper quoted curator Susan Tumarkin Goodman as saying that although she had no political agenda, the works do contain political content and there are messages behind them

Ha'aretz, The Jerusalem Post, and Makor Rishon-Hatzofe quoted the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) as saying on Monday that an ADL study covering five European countries -- France, Italy, Germany, Spain, and Poland -- found rising anti-Semitism, including beliefs that Jews have too much power in business and finance.

Mideast:

Summary:

The independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized: "The religious Zionist rabbis who ascended the Temple Mount on Sunday knowingly and irresponsibly brought a burning torch nearer to the most flammable hill in the Middle East."

The conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized: "It should be no surprise if many in the Arab world see success in denying Israel recognition in any part of Jerusalem as representing success in the campaign to deny Israel's right to exist."

Palestinian affairs researcher Moshe Elad, a former senior IDF official in the West Bank and former head of Israel-PA coordination, wrote in the mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot: "Condoleezza Rice's latest 'benchmark plan,' as well as the Roadmap's updated versions, represent symptoms not of solving problems of 'failed states' but of creating such states."

Block Quotes:

I. "A Provocation in Religious Clothing"

The independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized (5/15): "The religious Zionist rabbis who ascended the Temple Mount on Sunday knowingly and irresponsibly brought a burning torch nearer to the most flammable hill in the Middle East. No supposedly pretext of Jewish religious law will serve them when this stupid provocation sheds innocent blood, through riots of which only the beginning can be predicted, and whose continuation does not bear imagining.... There are two principal reasons for refraining from ascending the mount. One is strictly related to Jewish religious law and was observed for 2,000 years by all Jews whose way of life was governed by Jewish religious law. Now, these rabbis are suddenly going through contortions to make Jewish religious law more flexible, while ignoring the dangers that this entails.... The second principle in whose name Jews have refrained from praying on the Temple Mount since 1967 is political wisdom, which dictates extreme caution at the rim of a volcano. No rabbi is responsible for this arena; only the government is. Thus religious Zionist rabbis can try to run riot, but the government has an obligation to restrain them. The Prime Minister must forbid the rabbis from ascending the Temple Mount and prevent the political conflict from deteriorating into a devastating religious one."

II. "Jerusalem and Peace"

The conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized (5/15): "The flap over the expected nonattendance of European and American diplomats at Monday's official celebration of the 40th anniversary of Jerusalem's reunification is unfortunate.... At some level, it is understandable that the international community regards the issue of Jerusalem as a matter that must ultimately be resolved in negotiations with the Arab world, and in particular with the Palestinians. Israel, since agreeing to the Oslo Accords that define Jerusalem as a final status issue, does not dispute this. It is one thing, however, to treat a matter as negotiable, and quite another to lean so heavily against one side in a negotiation. There is no reason or justice, for example, in the international refusal to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital. Every nation has a right to determine its capital, even if the borders of that capital are destined to be the topic of negotiations.... Extreme measures taken not to recognize Israeli sovereignty over any part of Jerusalem are only matched by the blatant bias toward recognizing Palestinian claims to disputed areas. Such extremes include a practice by the State Department of refusing to mark the passports and birth certificates of American citizens born in Jerusalem with 'Jerusalem, Israel' as their birthplace. This practice continues despite the passage of a law in 2002 mandating its cessation.... It should be no surprise if many in the Arab world see success in denying Israel recognition in any part of Jerusalem as representing success in the campaign to deny Israel's right to exist. The opposite policy -- that of recognizing that Jerusalem, even if its borders are disputed, is Israel's capital -- would have a proportionately positive effect on the prospects for peace: it would be taken in the Muslim world as further international rejection of

the goal of destroying Israel. It is this goal that is the only real obstacle to peace; anything that contributes to its abandonment is an important step toward ending the Arab-Israeli conflict."

III. "They Were Given a State"

Palestinian affairs researcher Moshe Elad, a former senior IDF official in the West Bank and former head of Israel-PA coordination, wrote in the mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (5/15): "In July 2004, close to its 228th Independence Day, the United States established the 'Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization' of failed states. The person in charge of the 'reconstruction' of states, Carlos Pascual, explained at the time that failed states represented a strategic threat to the Western world, in particular to the US, and that, more than the US is interested in their stabilization, it is looking for its benefit in reconstructing them -- what was said was 'its benefit,' not that of the failing states, and certainly not that of their neighbors. Condoleezza Rice's latest 'benchmark plan,' as well as the Roadmap's updated versions, represent symptoms not of solving problems of 'failed states' but of creating such states. Proclaiming the lifting of roadblocks and the opening of crossings in a way that is totally detached from the security reality currently in place in the territories is a classical expression of the 'lame duck' policy of US administrations in their waning days. Such declarations will cause Palestine to join the long list in the hands of the US administrations, which shows that from 1955 to 2000 there have been 144 failed states that threatened world peace."

JONES